

Palm_School_Palomares_Hortensia_Foto_Voz _Transcript

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Speaker 1, Hortensia Palomares, Jasmine Gardner

Speaker 1 00:00

I'm going to start the recording. Okay, okay,

Jasmine Gardner 00:07

action, hi, so I'm going to read this, and then we're going to pause, and then I will talk to you about the photos. Okay, hi. Today is Sunday, December 15, 2024 My name is Jasmine Gardner. I'm conducting a photo vos with Hortensia Palomares, Austin, Texas for the Travis County palm school or History Project. We are recording at the University of Texas at Austin main campus. Thank you, horticia, for agreeing for this interview, we will now be taking a five second pause to record the room tone. Please do not make any sound during this time.

Jasmine Gardner 00:57

All right, so we will now start with photo one, and this photo, When was it taken? It

Hortensia Palomares 01:07

was taken in 1959 it was for the 5919 60 school year at Palm school.

Jasmine Gardner 01:17

And you said it was taken at Palm school?

Hortensia Palomares 01:20

Yes. Location, palm school, Austin, Texas. Great.

Jasmine Gardner 01:24

And who was in the photo? That's

Hortensia Palomares 01:27

me, and this is my first grade picture.

Jasmine Gardner 01:34

And can you tell me, like, what exactly is happening in the photo? Anything that you remember about that day, any details.

Hortensia Palomares 01:44

So this was the photo, you know, taken by the school that now I'm glad to have a memory of. So every year you know, photos was taken, I'm missing a few, but this is my first grade, and I was six and a half years old when I entered school. And so this is I had a birthday. You know, earlier that year, first grade, my first grade teacher was Miss Beverly and then Miss Walker, because Miss Beverly had to leave the school because she was going to have a baby. And so the first grade was my first experience in school, and that year, I did not speak English yet. When I first entered, my mother had to have some help with somebody translating for her. I don't remember exactly what my mother might have asked, but she may have asked like, what time would she be getting off of school so she could come pick me up, but she walked me over there to, you know, to palm school. At the time we lived, we lived on Third Street, next door to the Baron tortillas, and so we had to walk, and that was a few a few blocks away, not that far, because most during those days we would walk, often to everywhere, almost everywhere. And at the time we had to cross, we had to cross what was called East Avenue. There was no i h 35 yet it later became that street. East Avenue later became i h 35 and we had to cross that major, that major highway. But at that time it was, it was East Avenue that we had to cross, and my mother walked me over there. Excuse me,

Jasmine Gardner 04:12

all right, so for the second photo. When was this taken?

Hortensia Palomares 04:18

This was taken during my when I was in second grade, my teacher in the second grade was was Mary Grace Herrera. She was a wonderful teacher that I remember, excuse me. Go ahead. Okay, yeah, as I remember, she, she was a wonderful teacher. I during that year in the second grade, I still recall, you know, still not being proficient in English. Yet I was still learning. And so I remember Miss Herrera was so, you know, it was just really a nice, kind person. And she suggested that I go play after school with this with a friend of a friend of mine who was also in her class. And this friend was Brenda Andrews, and Brenda lived in the neighborhood. She was one of the last remaining part of the white families that lived in our neighborhood. But obviously she was an English speaker, and so I would go after school with her and and play. And so that was the idea that, you know, Miss Herrera had, that I could kind of just learn English, you know, just practice English. And I had lots of fun. Brenda had lots of wonderful toys. And her grandma, she lived with her grandparents. And so whenever I would go over there, she would also give me a bottle of soda, of coke, Coca Cola. And that was a that was a fun, fun thing for me to do, like this whole soda. And in my family, we didn't, we didn't drink a lot of soda. So that was kind of a treat for me, it was fun. I remember that second grade, yeah, second grade also was a year that I got the chicken pox, so I had to miss school. By the way, I loved school. I did not like to miss a day of school. So so having to miss because I had the chicken pox, was kind of sad for me. So that was my

second grade experience. But, and I remember I got a little bit behind. I think it was math that I remember kind of like needing to catch up because I had missed out a lot. I mean, even then, I kind of, I don't know I was young, but even then, I felt like I had missed out, and I was not happy that I had to miss school. So that's my second grade experience.

Jasmine Gardner 07:10

Do you remember how long you were out of school when you had the chicken pox?

Hortensia Palomares 07:13

It was not a week, but it was several days. Yeah, it was several days. And there's probably a weekend in there. So so it may have been, you know, 3, 4, 5, days, including a weekend. Yeah,

Jasmine Gardner 07:26

and you and Brenda's relationship, did ya'll continue that friendship?

Hortensia Palomares 07:30

We continued, yeah, until she and her grandparents moved away at that time. I don't remember exactly when it was. I think she may have gone through through the sixth grade, probably, but I didn't go often as often to her house anymore, but we were friends in school and but by that time, yeah, there a lot of the white Families who lived in the neighborhood started to move away.

Jasmine Gardner 08:05

And photo too you, you took this picture, where and who's in it?

Hortensia Palomares 08:12

Photo too oh this one, yes. Oh, we're still on this one. I just want you to stay. Oh, yes. So that's me, Hortensia Palomares, in the second grade palm school during the school year of 1960 to 1961.

Jasmine Gardner 08:30

thank you for that. All right, let's move to the third photo, and when and where and who is in this photo.

Hortensia Palomares 08:38

Okay, this is me, Hortensia Palomares at Palm school during the year 1963 64 school year, and I'm in the fifth grade here. The fifth grade. My teacher was Miss Anglin. The fifth grade, as I recall, was kind of an eventful year for me, because several things happened that year. For one, in the in the fall, I mean, I'm sorry, in the spring, I became a naturalized citizen, and that that was an important event, because my father, when we first came to the US, it was just me and my parents, and after we arrived in the US, then my sisters were all born in the US. One sister was born in Chicago, and the other three were born in Austin, but so my father had to well, he decided that he would become a citizen. So he studied for the citizenship exam, and he when it was time, they asked him. Him, after he had filled out all the all the paperwork, they asked him if he had any children who were under 18 years old that wanted to become citizens, they could automatically become citizens. And I guess the idea was that because a child like me in the fifth grade, we were all by that time, we were already studying the things, the very things that my father studied for and to become a citizen. And those are all the basic citizenship questions, such

as, you know, the stars and the stripes on the flag, you know, things like that. And you know, knowing the you know the Pledge of Allegiance, you know knowing about who the president is during that time, you know things like that, just basic civics kind of questions. So they figured by that time, a fifth grader in school should know these kinds of things, so, so that was good. And my father and I both went to the US Supreme Court here, or the, maybe it's a state court here in Austin, on Eighth Street at the time. And we were with among a lot of people who were becoming citizens, and we had to swear to an oath to citizenship. And it was, it was kind of, it was a proud moment for both me and my father. So I was 11 at that time, and then after that, we got to celebrate across the street, and we went to to a an Italian restaurant, which was fun, and it's a lot of fun because it was like, We didn't go to restaurants that often back in in those days, we ate at home. Parent, Mother usually cooked, so that was kind of an event. And because we were now citizens, my mother later studied for the citizenship and became a citizen too. But that was my experience there. And the other thing that happened that year, well, that was in the spring, but in the fall. That was also the sad moment when we found out that that President John F Kennedy had been assassinated. That was 1963, the fall of 63 November. And the reason, one of the reasons it's memorable to me is because where my classroom was, my fifth grade classroom was next, next door, was the girls bathroom, and then next door to to the to that bathroom was the sixth grade class. We were fifth grade, and these were sixth grade. And so the sixth graders, we looked up to them. They were like, Oh, they were big shots. They were, you know, they were older. But we heard, like, lots of crying, and like, really loud crying. And it was these girls, sixth graders had come to the restroom to dry their tears, but I was close to the the door, so I could hear all this. And, you know, we we all ended up hearing them crying, and we went to ask, find, to try to find out what, what was going on. And that's when we learned, I guess their teacher must have told them what had happened. But that's how I remember learning about that. And I was kind of like, okay, you know, this is, this is a very sad event, a sad because Kennedy was generally, you know, liked by by everyone. And then the other thing, going back to the spring, is like, in February, which is also in February, was when I became a citizen. But in February we we watched the Beatles with like over 70, 70 million people, you know, on TV. So that was a big, big event. And then in the fifth grade, because of the Beatles, Beatle mania. We there were four, four of us girls. We were kind of best friends. We did a little like, what is it like? We kind of reenact a little pantomiming, of singing, the singing, the song, lip syncing, you know, and kind of doing the gestures like the Beatles. I forgot what the song was. I totally forgot what the song was. But I don't think my friend remembers. One of my friends that was in the group is Anna Saucedo, who's downstairs now, who's being interviewed. She didn't remember the song either. I asked her a few days ago. Oh, do you remember we did? She remembers doing it, but she doesn't remember the song. So the Beatles were a big event in our lives.

Speaker 1 15:10

And I actually have a follow up question from earlier, is it okay if we get the name of your mother, father and your siblings? Okay?

Hortensia Palomares 15:17

Yeah. My father is Ceferino Palomares Mar, C, E, F, E, R, I, N, O, and then Palomares and that his other last name is Mar, M, A, R, and my mother is Maria Palomares. And then my sibling after me is Maria Guadalupe. You don't need her last name now, they're all They're all married now I'm the one who kept my name the my third sister is "Conchita" Connie. She goes by Connie Palomares. Then my

third, my fourth sister is Carmelita, and then my last sister is Irma. I R M A Irma. And so, yeah, five girls. So my dad had to deal with all these ladies, and where do you fall in that line? I'm the oldest. I'm the oldest. Yeah, so it was just me and my parents who immigrated to the US in 1956 when I was three years old. And then, as I said in my interview, so we, we entered. Our port of entry was Laredo, Texas, but we went straight through Texas in a bus and we went to Chicago. That's where we went. We didn't come to Texas. We entered through Texas, but we didn't come to live here, and the reason was because my father had been part of the Bracero program in the 40s during World War Two, when the US was involved in World War Two, the the US recruited young men from Mexico to come and work here, to fill in the jobs that were, that were needed because soldiers were gone off to war. So a lot of the things that some of the things that my dad did was he did. He did farm working. He picked crops. That was a lot, but then he found out that there was probably more, more money to be made working for the railroad, because the railroads were always were also being built and developed more at that time, during the 40s here in the US, I think they had done this after the depression, after the US depression, then there was a lot of work done on the railroads in this country. And then the 40s, it was continuing. So my father found that he was still young and, you know, strong, and so he did that, and then kind of went back to Chicago, and in Chicago, he also found work there that paid more than than crops, but he worked in the mills. So he ended up working in this corn mill. I think that was a mill that made, like Kellogg's Corn Flakes, I'm not sure, but something like that, yeah, because it was corn, yeah, and it was the company was called International Harvester. So they harvested corn, yeah, so anyway, that's where my father, what he did at the time. What else did you ask me? Oh, that was okay, yeah, that kind of veered off a little bit. Okay. So we can move forward, okay, the fourth photo, okay, can

Jasmine Gardner 19:27

you tell me when, where and who was in that photo?

Hortensia Palomares 19:30

Okay, that's Hortensia Palomares me palm school, and the school year is 1964 1965 i Five, and that is when I was in the sixth grade at Palm. So sixth grade was my final year there at Palm. My teacher was Miss Houston, and the. Was a good year for me. I think I got perfect attendance. There. I got perfect attendance. There. It was just that year that I didn't get perfect attendance. I loved school, and the sixth grade was good. Ms Houston was a young teacher compared to some of the other teachers who were older, and we were happy to have her there. I mean, we were happy to be in her class. And I learned a lot. I learned a lot in the sixth grade. I think by the sixth grade, I was still in choir, I was a safety patrol girl, and that was the also the year that that because we were Safety Patrol, and I think because we were in the choir, we were tasked with setting up the Christmas tree in the in the cafeteria. That was a lot of fun. And and now and then we got to have, there was a Christmas party for the sixth graders, and we got to dance with a boy for the first time. And it was that was kind of cute and funny, because we were dancing like this, so far apart. We were still, you know, embarrassed and but it was fun. It was a lot of fun. We learned throughout the years, including the sixth grade. We every year we would learn all the Christmas songs that were assigned to us, and all the rest of the schools in the Austin Independent School District also learned the same songs, and we would come together in December and go to what is now Palmer auditorium, and we would all sing. So if you can imagine a whole, you know, choir, chorus of kids, all singing. It was beautiful. It was it was beautiful. I enjoyed, I enjoyed music. I enjoyed,

you know that the Christmas music too, also that year we had, we used to have Palm Olympics. The Palm Olympics we, we had the 50 yard dash, which I would always win. Even beat the boys and and the boy I dance with at Christmas, I beat him. And he's never, he never lived it down. He's like, he still would talk about it years later as adults, when I ran into him, he told my husband, she's the only girl that ever beat me running because I was a fast I was pretty fast. I was very, very, super fast. I would do the broad jump, you know, I didn't do the, you know, I think broad jump in the 50 yard dash, I did that. That was the sixth grade. Yeah, safety patrol girl, we got to do that. What else? Oh, yeah, also, most of the years again, including sixth grade, we we had, we could go to the Austin symphony, to hear the Austin symphony and but that cost, I think the symphony and the school district had an agreement that if We wanted to go to the symphony to four programs per year. It cost 25 cents for each of those four. So it was \$1 and they would give us this little card that had little little slots where you would put, we put a quarter in each one, and we turn it into the school, and then, so we got to go, got to get off the school. But we would, you know, listen to go, listen to the symphony. It was, it was beautiful, because my parents, my father, especially, he loved, he loved classical music, and he wanted to introduce us to, you know, to cultural events and things like that. And so he wanted to make sure that I was exposed to that I had great parents. Had great parents who really encouraged us to go to school and to excel and to, you know, just to do well. But Symphony was kind of special. So got to go four times to listen to the symphony. So that was kind of my, my sixth grade. Oh, we also did the cultural other cultural events that we did were again, at the end of the year, we did some dance. And one of them was a schottische you know where it's like a German, it's called, it's a German dance. And then we did, we did some square dancing, actual square dancing. And we, yeah, got to dance with different other boys again, this time we, you know, we weren't as shy as at Christmas. We had fun. And then we also did the Maypole, which is really beautiful, yeah, and, and that was a tradition that that was there at Palm School at that time. I didn't think of it at the time, but later on, yeah, I wondered why. I mean, even though I really enjoyed all that later, I'm like, I'm glad we now have in the schools folklorico and, you know, Mexican-American related. But at that time, we didn't, at the time that I went to palm we didn't, even though, by the time I went to palm, the majority of the students, or the kids were, they were Mexican-American by that time, but we still didn't do the school did not encourage that. I mean, it was just not part of it, you know. And so, yeah, the my memories of that now, in retrospect, I'm like, Okay, we should have had something like that. We would here and there, we would sing some songs, but they were kind of comical. And, you know, and thinking back, yeah, it makes you think about how, you know, how we were lacking in that at the time, you know, in those older times, the early 60s when I went to school, yeah, and glad we have them now. But it took, took a long time. It took a long time for people to recognize, you know, the beauty of a Mexican American culture. And yet we were doing the other things. But, you know, all in all, we had good, a good experience. I mean, I did, but, you know, I it didn't go unnoticed that, you know they were that, you know that, that Mexican American kids, you know, we're still like, Okay, you need to speak English and not Spanish. But I was never, I was never punished for speaking Spanish. My husband was. He came through Palm five years, actually six years before me, so his experience was a little different. And so, yeah, by the time, you know, by the early 60s, then they had, they were still paddling. They were still doing corporal punishment, yeah, so we tried not to get in trouble. We wore dresses. Little girls wore dresses. We weren't allowed to wear pants. We weren't allowed to wear pants until, for me and here in Austin, until 1970 my senior year, senior year, we got to wear pants.

Jasmine Gardner 28:18

Did you wear those pants? Did you put on some pants.

Hortensia Palomares 28:20

I put some pants on, right? Well, I actually, in my interview, I told him how I rebelled and wore pants and got in trouble. That's when I did get in trouble. And, and I just wore them because I wanted to, right, and, but I knew I was going to get in trouble, so I got sent home, and then I came back with a dress on. But then I did it again two more times. That was my rebelling, and then my counselors told me. She said, "I'm going to let you in on a little secret. Next year we're going to the rules are going to be suspended". You will be I'm like, "yes about time!", you know, because I had cool pants at that time. You know, this is the 70s we had, you know, cool clothes, the bell bottoms, yes, the bell bottoms, yeah, yeah, yeah. We started bell bottoms and, yeah, all the wonderful colors and everything. And I had long hair. I had the long hair, although it's always been curly. I never had straight hair, never, never could do quite the straight hair. But yeah, that was, that's what we did. So in the in the winter, when we were when it was really, really super cold days, we would, my mother would have us put pants underneath our dress, and then we'd take off the pants when we got to school, just to protect us, you know, from the cold. But so that was allowed. That was okay. But then, and then we put them back on if it was still cold in the afternoon to go to walk back home. But yeah, that's yeah. So that was sixth grade. Sixth grade weeks my last year graduated, they had a little ceremony, and I did pretty well. I made the honor roll, like all of the every six weeks, first honor roll. So the other I pretty much did that all the time, beginning in the fourth grade, is when honor roll from first through third. We didn't have that. Kids didn't have that, but after that, yeah, it was, it was fun.

Jasmine Gardner 30:46

I noticed here that you're missing third and fourth grade. Is there a reason for that?

Hortensia Palomares 30:51

I'm sure that my parents brought them, but I, I don't know, in all the, you know, they probably got lost somewhere in the all the shuffling of, you know, moving or whatever, or just my my mother, or we put some things in the garage, in our garage, and there was rain, so some things might have gotten, you know, damaged or destroyed. So, yeah, no, I can't find them. I wish I did, I know, because I was like, Okay, what year was that? You know, yeah, third and fourth are missing. They may exist. They may exist somewhere. Yeah, I just don't have them. And then in seventh and eighth grade, I think I have my seventh grade, but I'm missing some more. And then in high school, I know we took them, but I didn't, I didn't buy any until my 12th obviously, you know, because I wanted the one that was going to come out in the in the year book. So and in my what we call junior high, which was seventh and eighth and ninth grade. Those were I bought the year books. Those were year books. So I have my photos, at least I have something there I own the, you know, the the year book, so I know how I look then. And then the other end, the the year books, there's some more assorted pictures of of me in, you know, in in doing activities and things like that. Yeah, right.

Jasmine Gardner 32:39

That is the end for the planning questions for your photos, did you have anything else that you wanted to add?

Hortensia Palomares 32:49

I probably have, you know, some, some of my other artifacts, but I just didn't have time to get them, get them together. Yeah, I figured these kind of were pretty interesting to look back at, especially the little bitty one. And

Speaker 1 33:09

if, in the future, you have any other pictures that you want to send us, okay, you can definitely contact voces, and we'll get either, oh, physically go and get them, scan them for you phone. You know, we'll figure out a way to go. Okay, if you ever find anyone that you really want us to have? Okay, okay, yeah.

Jasmine Gardner 33:27

All right, sounds good. All right, so thank you. I'm going to stop the recording now, and this is the end of our audio interview. All.